

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NEWS FOR SUNDAY 1 APRIL 2018

Good morning and welcome to the weekly news bulletin of the South African Radio League read by [your name, call sign and QTH]

The South African Radio League broadcasts a news bulletin each Sunday in Afrikaans as well as English, at 08:15 and 08:30 Central African Time respectively, on HF as well as on various VHF and UHF repeaters around the country. The bulletin is relayed via Echolink by ZS6JPL. A podcast is available on the League website.

Audio and text bulletins may be downloaded from the League website at www.sarl.org.za where you can also sign up to receive future bulletins by e-mail.

In the news, today:

REGISTRATION FOR THE 2018 SARL AGM

AFTER 37 YEARS OF INACTIVITY, NASA RECEIVES RESPONSE FROM VOYAGER 1 SPACECRAFT

and

MAJOR METEOR SHOWER SEASON STARTS THIS MONTH

Stay tuned for more information on these and other interesting news items.

REGISTRATION FOR THE 2018 SARL AGM

The National Convention organizing committee of the Pretoria Amateur Radio Club wants to thank those members who have already submitted their AGM registration forms. At the same time, PARC urges all members who plan to attend the AGM and who have not sent us their registration forms to urgently do so, to allow us to finalise the head count for the AGM, lunch and awards dinner.

PARC must confirm final headcount numbers with the Event Coordinator at Farm Inn by latest 12 April 2018. The AGM registration form and related information is available on the League's web site. For more information, please contact Etienne Naude at etienne@afgrid.com or contact him on 082 553 0542.

If you cannot attend the AGM, please give your proxy vote to a member who will be attending.

THREE CONTESTS IN NEXT WEEK

The first leg of the popular SARL 80 metre QSO Party is on the air from 17:00 to 20:00 UTC on Thursday 5 April 2018 with phone activity between 3 603 and 3 650, and 3 700 and 3 800 kHz. Please note that the segment 3 651 to 3 699.99 kHz is contest free. The exchange is your call sign, a RS signal report and your name. You can participate as a Single Operator station or as a Short-Wave

Listener. You score 10 points for every contact with a South African station and 15 points for every contact with a station outside South Africa. Log sheets in MS Excel format ONLY must be submitted by 12 April 2018 by e-mail to zs5lp@vodamail.co.za

The first RaDAR Challenge for 2018 takes place on Saturday 7 April 2018 from 00:00 to 23:59 UTC. All amateur bands are allowed including cross band contacts via amateur radio satellites will all modes - CW, SSB, FM or any legal amateur radio digital mode. The exchange is your call sign, your name, a RS(T) report and grid locator. Log sheets must be submitted by 14 April 2018 and sent by e-mail to edleighton@gmail.com.

The first SARL VHF/UHF Digital Contest using RTTY/PSK/WSJT but not limited to these modes, takes place from 10:00 UTC Saturday 7 April 2018 to 10:00 UTC Sunday 8 April 2018 with activity on 6, 4 and 2 metres, 70 and 23 cm and higher. You can participate as a Single Operator station, a Multi Operator station, a Portable/Field Station or a Limited 4 Hour station. The VHF/UHF log sheet and summary sheet is available in MS Excel format on the League web site and log sheets must be submitted by 16 April 2018 by e-mail to contest@sarl.org.za.

Please consult the 2018 SARL Blue Book for all the information on these three contests.

AFTER 37 YEARS OF INACTIVITY, NASA RECEIVES RESPONSE FROM VOYAGER 1 SPACECRAFT

The thrusters aboard the Voyager 1 spacecraft just did what we thought was impossible. After 37 years of inactivity, NASA just received response from the spacecraft 20 billion kilometres away, NASA said in a statement on its website. Voyager 1 is NASA's farthest and fastest spacecraft. It was launched on 5 September 1977. Having operated for 40 years, 6 months and 14 days as of 19 March 2018, the spacecraft relies on small devices called thrusters to orient itself, so it can communicate with Earth. These thrusters fire in tiny pulses, or "puffs," lasting mere milliseconds, to subtly rotate the spacecraft so that its antenna points at our planet. Now, the Voyager team can use a set of four backup thrusters, dormant since 1980.

"With these thrusters that are still functional after 37 years without use, we will be able to extend the life of the Voyager 1 spacecraft by two to three years," said Suzanne Dodd, project manager for Voyager at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, California. "The Voyager flight team dug up decades-old data and examined the software that was coded in an outdated assembler language, to make sure we could safely test the thrusters," said Chris Jones, chief engineer at JPL.

SDR WORKSHOP ON 5 MAY

The next AMSATSA/SARL SDR workshop will be held on 5 May 2018 at the National Amateur Radio Centre in Gauteng. The programme will include: set-

ting up your station to the server to automatically upload your data, what type of antennas to consider, an in-depth discussion with Vince Harrison, ZS6BTY, and an introduction to GNU Radio. The registration fee is R50 for SARL and AMSATSA members and R100 for non-members. Details and registration form can be found on www.amsatsa.org.za.

You are listening to a news Bulletin of the South African Radio League.

GET RADIO ACTIVE IN A DIFFERENT WAY

The SARL will soon be featuring a 3-minute slot on LM Radio. It will be broadcast mid-morning on a Saturday on 702 kHz AM from Johannesburg. The SARL invites all young radio amateurs to send us a WhatsApp voice note. Record why you think amateur radio is cool or "Amateur radio is cool because it gets into new technologies." Use your own words. Start your voice note with I am, your name and callsign. The voice note must not be longer than 1 minute. Send your voice note to 076 402 1464. You may just be the next radio star.

PIRATE ALERT

Francois Botha, ZS4X, has notified the SARL Office and SARL News that his old call sign, ZS6BUU, is being pirated using the FT8 mode. ICASA has confirmed that ZS6BUU has not been re-issued.

RADIO AMATEUR PUBLISHES HIS FIRST BOOK

Martin Schwella, ZS4MC, a well-known illustrator in Bloemfontein, has published his first book "A True Winner." When his wife Simoné became pregnant, Martin decided to write a book for his new son. He is now busy on a second book. If you are looking for books for your young children or grandchildren, contact Martin, ZS4MC. The books are in Afrikaans and English.

MAJOR METEOR SHOWER SEASON STARTS THIS MONTH

There are 10 major meteor showers with visible trails of 15 per hour or more starting in April and ending at the beginning of January next year. The major meteor showers with their peak dates and maximum visible trails are listed below:

Lyrids: 22 April (20 trails) Eta Aquarids: 6 May (50 trails) Daytime Arietids: 7 June (50 trails) Southern Delta Aquarids: 28 July (25 trails) Perseids: 12 August (120 trails) Draconids: 8 October (daylight, rarely visible - provided a 3-minute 3-way FM contact on 50 MHz) Orionids: 21 October (15 trails) Leonids: 17 November (15 trails - every 33 years can produce almost continuous trails during its peak period) Geminids: 14 December (120 trails) Quadrantids: 3 January (120 trails)

Many major meteor showers become visible weeks before their peak periods and then decline over the next few weeks, whereas some only appear a day or so before and after their peak periods. Minor meter showers are around daily, but peak in the early mornings making possible digital contacts on 50, 70 and

144 MHz. There are currently 95 meteor showers, major and minor, present throughout the year.

RESULTS OF THE SARL VHF/UHF ANALOGUE COMPETITION

The results of the first leg of the SARL VHF/UHF Analogue Competition held on 10 and 11 March 2018 have been released.

Carl Minne, ZS6CBQ, is the overall winner with 165 542 points and he is the winner of the Base station, Single operator category. Christo Greyling, ZR6AUI/4, with 80 709 is the winner of the Field Station category. Jacques Louw, ZS4WW, with 66 220 points is the winner of the Limited 4-hour category and the Cape Radio Group, ZS1CRG, with 36 354 points is the winner of the Club/Multi operator category. The full set of results can be found at www.sarl.org.za/public/contest_results/contestresults.asp

SARL DIGITAL CONTEST RESULTS

Only five logs were received. The results of the SARL Digital Contest held on 25 February are as follows:

Allan Saul, ZS1LS, with 267 points is the winner of the Digital competition followed by Jess Clark, ZS6JES with 204 points, Jan Botha, ZS4JAN with 201 points, Theunis Potgieter, ZS2EC with 119 points and Pieter Jacobs, V51PJ with 6 points. Congratulations to Allan!

PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the solar activity is expected to remain at very low levels. There are currently no sunspots visible and no flaring activity is expected. If you want to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week will be around one. The 15 to 30 m bands may provide lots of DX fun. Please visit the website spaceweather.sansa.org.za for further information.

Finally, a Diary of some upcoming events:

5 April the SARL 80 m QSO Party 7 April the RaDAR Challenge 7 and 8 April the SARL VHF/UHF Digital Competition 13 to 15 April the SARL National Convention in Pretoria 18 April World Amateur Radio Day 21 April the Autumn QRP Competition 22 April the ZS4 Sprint and registration for the MAY RAE closes 5 May SDR Workshop at the NARC

To conclude our bulletin a quick overview of our main news item:

The National Convention organizing committee of the Pretoria Amateur Radio Club wants to thank those members who have already submitted their AGM registration forms. At the same time, PARC urges all members who plan to attend the AGM and who have not sent us their registration forms to urgently do so, to allow us to finalise the head count for the AGM, lunch and awards dinner.

This concludes our bulletin for this morning.

Clubs and individuals are invited to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners, if possible, in both English and Afrikaans, by following the news inbox link on the South African Radio League web page. News items for inclusion in the bulletin should reach the news team no later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning for the weekly amateur radio program, 'Amateur Radio Today' at 10:00 Central African Time. The program can be heard on VHF and UHF repeaters countrywide and on 7 082 kHz lower side-band and on 7 205 kHz and 17 760 kHz AM. There is also a podcast available from Dick Stratford, ZS6RO. A rebroadcast can be heard on Monday evenings at 18:30 Central African Time on 3 230 kHz AM.

We welcome your signal reports, comments and suggestions; please send these by e-mail to artoday@sarl.org.za. Sentech sponsors the radio transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies.

You have listened to a news bulletin compiled by Emile Venter, ZS6V, edited by Dennis Green, ZS4BS, and read by

From the news team, best wishes for the week ahead.

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